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Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 22 of Security Council resolution 2062 (2012), by which the Security Council requested me to undertake an assessment of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and to provide a special report no later than 31 March 2013 with recommendations on benchmarks to measure and track progress towards the achievement of long-term stability in Côte d'Ivoire; recommendations on possible adjustments in the structure and strength of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI); options to reinforce inter-mission cooperation arrangements between UNOCI and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL); and an update on the implementation of the UNOCI protection of civilians strategy.

II. Findings of the assessment mission

2. A multidisciplinary assessment mission led by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, visited Côte d'Ivoire from 4 to 16 February. The team consulted with a wide range of stakeholders including: President Alassane Dramane Ouattara and members of the Government; the leadership of the national armed forces, the police and the gendarmerie; the President of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission; representatives of political parties and civil society; international partners; and UNOCI, UNMIL and the United Nations country teams in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. The team visited locations throughout the country and conducted an assessment on both sides of the Ivorian border with Liberia. The head of the assessment mission also visited Monrovia and Accra to consult national authorities.

A. Situation on the ground

Overall situation

3. In discussions with the assessment mission, President Ouattara and other national and international stakeholders highlighted the significant progress achieved since the last assessment in February 2012, and particularly during the past six months with respect to the general security situation. Overall, it was found that,

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despite persistent fragility, Côte d'Ivoire was entering a phase of consolidation since the end of the 2011 post-elections crisis.

4. President Ouattara's leadership has been critical to addressing immediate security challenges, accelerating economic recovery and initiating sensitive processes such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform. The security situation in the border area with Liberia has improved considerably, as a result of efforts at the highest level, enhanced cooperation between the authorities of the two countries at various levels and the deployment of national security personnel on both sides of the border. However, serious challenges remain, as demonstrated by an attack on 13 March on Zilebly village in western Côte d'Ivoire, near the border with Liberia, which resulted in at least six confirmed deaths. Enhanced relations between Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana have had a positive impact on the security situation, including along the border with Ghana.

5. Côte d'Ivoire continued to play an active leadership role within the subregion. Since assuming the chairmanship of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) last year, President Ouattara has mobilized regional leadership and resources to address a number of issues of concern, most critically to galvanize a common position to address the Malian crises.

Political situation

6. The new Government formed in November 2012 by President Ouattara has demonstrated commitment and discipline in implementing his vision. The local administration has become more effective, as has the National Assembly. The residual legislative elections in six outstanding districts were conducted in a peaceful manner on 3 February, as confirmed by my Special Representative on 20 February.

7. The local elections scheduled to take place on 21 April have dominated political discussions over the past weeks, including within the ruling Rassemblement des houphouétistes pour la démocratie et la paix (RHDP) coalition. Although coalition partners in the national Government, President Ouattara's Rassemblement des républicains (RDR) and former President Bédié's Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) have mainly presented separate lists to run in the local elections. Meanwhile, the former ruling party Front populaire ivorien (FPI) announced, on 16 February, its decision not to participate in the polls, citing lack of consultations with respect to the polling date. Five of the 11 opposition political parties, which are part of the permanent forum for dialogue, followed the decision of the FPI, although some party members may run as independent candidates. In a communiqué dated 3 March, FPI reiterated its demand that the elections be postponed, accusing the Government of excluding opposition parties from the electoral process.

8. The upcoming 2015 presidential and legislative elections are already shaping current political dynamics. Many of the assessment mission's interlocutors stressed the importance of electoral reforms to ensure that these elections are fair, transparent and inclusive. They recommended that such reforms should include the updating of the voters list and a review of the composition of the Independent Electoral Commission and the transparent delimitation of electoral boundaries for the legislative elections. Some underscored that the role played in the elections by

various media outlets, many of which are affiliated with political parties, would also need to be addressed.

9. The provisional release of some detainees affiliated with former President Laurent Gbagbo in December 2012 and intensified dialogue between the Government and the opposition were significant steps forward. Meetings were held within the framework of the permanent forum for dialogue, chaired by Prime Minister Duncan on 7 and 17 January, to discuss issues related to the local elections, including the composition of the Independent Electoral Commission and the financing of political parties. The former ruling party FPI and the opposition party Liberté pour la démocratie et pour la république chose not to participate in the meetings.

10. At the request of FPI, the Government engaged in direct discussions, with the Prime Minister presiding over meetings on 18 and 23 January. According to the report of a joint working group, agreement was reached on the need to return Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) to barracks; disarm unprofessional armed elements associated with FRCI; demobilize *dozos* (traditional hunters), which assumed security functions; equip the gendarmerie and police; protect opposition stakeholders; and end the illegal exploitation of land. Differences, however, remain with regard to the FPI request for a general amnesty and the composition of the Independent Electoral Commission. FPI is also advocating for a meeting between President Ouattara and former President Gbagbo, who is detained at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. Both sides have reiterated their commitment to continue discussions, with the last meeting taking place on 8 March.

11. President Ouattara and most other actors expressed the view that granting amnesty without holding perpetrators of serious crimes accountable would be contrary to the rule of law and entrench impunity, although pardons may be envisaged after a judicial process. They stressed the need for the Government to follow up on the recommendations of the National Commission of Inquiry to ensure that all perpetrators are held accountable, irrespective of their status or political affiliation. However, much more must be done to promote equitable justice and end the cycle of impunity and the increasing perception of victors' justice.

Reconciliation and social cohesion

12. Progress on the complex issue of reconciliation and social cohesion remains slow. Some Government officials expressed the view that reparations for victims would help move these critical processes forward. The Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission is struggling to complete its work and produce concrete results by 30 September 2013, when its mandate expires. The national authorities have taken some steps to improve social cohesion, including the adoption of a national programme for social cohesion. However, its implementation remains limited, and local authorities lack sufficient resources to support such processes at their level.

Security situation

13. The overall security situation remains fragile but has improved over the past six months. No major attacks targeting national security forces or Government installations have been reported since October last year. The improvement was attributed to the robust response of the Government to the attacks — although there

have been reports of excessive use of force, arbitrary arrests and many illegal detentions — and the arrest of a number of persons allegedly behind such attacks in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Liberia. The National Security Council in Côte d'Ivoire, established in August 2012 was assessed as an effective body for coordinating the security response of the Government, while there was also a more effective deployment of national law enforcement agencies across the country.

Threats to sustainable peace and security in Côte d'Ivoire

14. The overall progress notwithstanding, Côte d'Ivoire continues to face significant threats to its peace and security. Some of the major threats identified include political dynamics and remaining deep divisions; the continued existence of networks affiliated with the former regime aimed at destabilizing the Government; the reported presence of mercenaries, former combatants and other armed elements along the border with Liberia; the uncontrolled circulation of weapons; slow progress with reconciliation and security sector reform; halting progress in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; divisions and limited trust within and among the security agencies; continued human rights violations by formal and informal security agencies with a lack of accountability; inadequately trained and equipped law enforcement agencies; a lack of appropriate oversight and accountability for the armed forces; criminal activities; intercommunity violence; and unemployment and poverty.

15. The underlying root causes of the conflict such as land tenure, identity and control over and access to natural resources, remain unresolved, and are particularly acute in the west. The Government has undertaken initial steps towards addressing complex land tenure issues. However, interlocutors stressed that addressing this matter will be challenging, requiring a long-term, consensual approach and involving a wide range of actors.

16. Violent incidents remain an issue of concern, with easy access to weapons contributing to continuing attacks and armed robberies resulting in civilian deaths and injuries. Tensions have persisted between FRCI and parts of the population, and have led to a number of clashes. Confrontations between communities, often revolving around land tenure issues, have been reported throughout the country, most significantly on 17 January in the Diboké area of western Côte d'Ivoire, as a result of which four people were killed and many more wounded.

17. The West African subregion remains vulnerable to transnational and cross-border threats, including trafficking in drugs, persons and weapons, money laundering, and terrorism and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, which underscore the need for enhanced capacity to respond to these emerging threats. The risks of an unregulated maritime environment could be heightened by the recent discovery of oil in the coastal waters of Liberia and on the Ghanaian side of its maritime border with Côte d'Ivoire, if not pro-actively mitigated through a subregional approach.

Situation in the border areas

18. Côte d'Ivoire shares borders with Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Mali. As indicated in my last special report on UNOCI (S/2012/186) of 29 March 2012, these borders are porous, allowing for the uncontrolled movement of persons and goods. Overall, the situation along all borders of Côte d'Ivoire remains fragile

but relatively stable, with notable improvements since last year with respect to its border with Liberia. However, the risk of destabilisation persists.

19. On 25 January, a long-standing dispute about border demarcation between Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea was revived, when some 30 to 40 Guinean troops entered the Kpéaba border village and removed the Ivorian flag. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the two countries discussed the issue in the margins of the ECOWAS summit in Yamoussoukro on 28 February. According to subsequent statements, the two States committed to resolving the dispute in a peaceful manner. They withdrew their respective armies from the area and re-established a joint commission to delineate the border.

20. The situation along the border between Mali and Côte d'Ivoire was relatively stable, although some Ivorian interlocutors expressed the view that enhanced monitoring would be required, including through the possible deployment of unarmed unmanned aerial systems. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there have not been any requests for asylum from Malians entering Côte d'Ivoire since the start of the crisis.

21. Sustained efforts at the highest levels between Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana to improve bilateral dialogue and cooperation have enhanced confidence between the two countries. Approximately 8,600 refugees remain in Ghana, as do a group of high profile members of the former regime. Reportedly, some were behind attacks targeting national security forces and Government installations in Côte d'Ivoire last year. Ghanaian authorities carried out a number of arrests of Ivorian citizens, including former Young Patriots leader Charles Blé Goudé, who was extradited to Côte d'Ivoire, where he will be tried under domestic jurisdiction for crimes allegedly committed during the post-elections crisis. Mr. Blé Goudé has been charged with war crimes, attacking State security, treason and economic crimes. In the meantime, extradition proceedings against the spokesperson of former President Gbagbo, Justin Kone Katinan, are under way in Ghana. Ghanaian officials stressed the importance of completing all necessary proceedings in accordance with the rule of law before effecting any extraditions.

22. In a letter to the assessment mission, FPI representatives exiled in Ghana reaffirmed their willingness to participate in meaningful political dialogue under the condition that former President Gbagbo is released, while accusing the Ivorian Government of pressing for local elections without the opposition in order to increase its own chances of winning. They also highlighted as impediments to their return, the perceived lack of commitment of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to advance reconciliation; the absence of political freedom and equitable justice; continued human rights violations by FRCI, *dozos* and mercenaries; acts of reprisals; and occupation of their land.

23. Members of the assessment mission, together with UNOCI, UNMIL and the United Nations country teams in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, conducted an assessment of the situation in the border area between the two countries. The team visited Taï, Toulépleu and Guiglo in western Côte d'Ivoire, as well as Zwedru and Jorzon Town in eastern Liberia. They met with civilian and security authorities, members of host communities and Ivorian returnees and refugees, and observed a meeting of Operation Mayo at the B'hai border crossing point.

24. All interlocutors agreed that the situation in the border area has improved considerably in the past six months, with no major cross-border attacks confirmed since August 2012. This can in part be attributed to high-level strategic engagement by the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, as well as increased operational cooperation. Both Governments have increased deployment of national law enforcement personnel on both sides of the border, undertaken joint security operations, and increased contact and information sharing. In December 2012, the two armies engaged in joint manoeuvres along the Cavally river. Previously in June, the Government of Liberia had closed its border with Côte d'Ivoire, except for humanitarian purposes, in response to cross-border attacks. Many of the assessment mission's interlocutors noted that this has had a negative impact on the free movement of people and goods and was an impediment to cross-border dialogue.

25. On the Liberian side of the border, the deployment of a joint security task force (comprising personnel from the Liberia National Police, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, and the Armed Forces of Liberia) and the conduct of Operation Restore Hope, coupled with the arrest of some alleged perpetrators as mentioned below, are assessed as having contributed to weakening the networks behind the cross-border attacks. However, sustaining the deployment of this operation is challenging, given the many competing priorities to be covered by the limited national budget. Moreover, as noted in paragraph 4 above, the violent clashes that took place near the border on 13 March, reportedly between FRCI and armed elements, have underscored the continued fragility of the border situation. An investigation into the incident is under way.

26. To date, 11 Liberians and 8 Ivorians have been indicted in Liberia for suspected involvement in attacks in the Para area, including for the killing of UNOCI peacekeepers in Para on 8 June, and attacks on the Péhékanhouébli border post in 2012. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire has requested the extradition of the eight Ivorians. However, a Liberian court ruled against the petition on 25 February, since the accused were already under indictment in Liberia for the same offences, which is in keeping with the terms of their bilateral extradition treaty. Meanwhile, at least one of the indicted suspects was released on bail, reportedly for medical reasons. A number of interlocutors raised questions about whether Liberia's security and justice systems have sufficient capacity to effectively investigate and prosecute cases of this nature, in accordance with international due process standards.

27. Although the majority of Ivorian refugees in Liberia have returned to Côte d'Ivoire, nearly 63,000 remain. Refugees in Liberia cited security concerns, including distrust of FRCI, lack of disarmament of former combatants, fear of reprisals and what they termed as the occupation of their land by perceived foreigners as reasons preventing them from returning to Côte d'Ivoire. Members of the returnee population in western Côte d'Ivoire echoed many of these concerns, as did host communities on both sides of the border. Nonetheless, after nearly six months without any volunteers for repatriation, UNHCR has, so far this year, facilitated the voluntary return of 4,757 refugees from Liberia to Côte d'Ivoire.

Inter-mission cooperation

28. UNOCI and UNMIL have taken steps to improve their support to the respective Governments in addressing border security challenges. Enhanced formal liaison and information sharing between the missions' civilian and military

components is having a positive impact on operations and analysis. The two missions have also adopted a joint road map for inter-mission cooperation on the border region, with three main areas of focus: security and border control; strengthening State authority; and sustainable return and reintegration. The United Nations country teams are also working to support the long-term stabilization of the border area. To support these activities, UNOCI and UNMIL radio stations are transmitting messages targeting refugees and communities in eastern Liberia and western Côte d'Ivoire.

29. In June 2012, UNMIL and UNOCI developed a revitalized concept of operations for Operation Mayo to increase military cooperation and civilian participation. Since then, the missions have enhanced regular mirrored border patrols, followed by joint meetings twice a month, bringing together the military, the civilian and the police components of both missions, together with the security agencies of both Governments, local officials and traditional and community leaders. Common mapping of the border has also been completed. Meanwhile, there are several projects under way or envisaged by the United Nations country teams in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, including a cross-border food security project supported by the World Food Programme and the Food and Agricultural Organization. The assessment mission was informed of a request by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for a similar project in the border area with Ghana. UNOCI and the United Nations country team have met twice with representatives from Ghana and developed an action plan to address Ivorian refugee and border security challenges. My Special Representative has travelled to Accra in order to discuss these issues with Ghanaian officials and Ivorians based in Ghana, and UNOCI is using its public information capacity to disseminate reconciliation and other messages in refugee camps in Ghana.

Human rights

30. The report of the National Commission of Inquiry identified serious human rights violations committed by both sides during the post-elections crisis, although so far only perpetrators affiliated with the former regime have been brought to justice. The establishment of the National Human Rights Commission, the ratification of the Rome Statute and the adoption of the new family law providing for equality between men and women in marriage were important steps towards improving the legislative framework to promote and protect human rights and end impunity.

31. The human rights situation in the country remains extremely worrying, with continued reports of major human rights violations (summary executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and illegal detentions, ill treatment and torture, and sexual and gender-based violence) committed by armed individuals, including FRCI elements. A number of incidents of arbitrary arrests by FRCI and break-ins into private houses of persons suspected of threatening State security were reported in 2012 in reaction to the armed attacks targeting national security forces and Government installations. Some interlocutors also noted that individuals and communities continue to be targeted on the basis of nationality and ethnicity, while a high number of incidents of intercommunity and ethnically motivated violence resulted in grave human rights violations. There were also continued reports of repeated interference by FRCI and *dozos* with the administration of justice.

Sexual violence

32. According to the Government, the incidence of sexual violence has decreased significantly since the end of the post-elections crisis, although sexual and gender-based violence in Côte d'Ivoire remains alarming. The examination of the pattern of sexual violence was inconclusive, with some interlocutors observing that the increase in recorded incidents may be owing to enhanced reporting, rather than actual increases, while estimates of cases of rapes committed by men in uniforms varied widely. The leniency of sentencing and the failure to classify sexual- and gender-based offences as crimes highlighted the systemic obstacles to combating sexual violence, as did the inadequacy of the legal frameworks and the lack of access to justice, resulting in large part from the high cost of medical certificates to facilitate court hearings. Interlocutors emphasized that the fear of stigmatization is preventing many victims from filing complaints, noting the need to raise awareness about sexual- and gender-based violence prevention, including within Government agencies. Ending impunity and reforming the security sector were identified as critical factors to combat the scourge of sexual violence.

Implementation of the UNOCI protection of civilians strategy

33. Improved interaction with the local population and authorities through enhanced UNOCI field presence has helped to increase the capacity of the Mission to effectively protect civilians. The Mission now has established a civilian presence in 18 locations and has increased the number of civilian staff members in western and northern Côte d'Ivoire to monitor, report and act on civilian protection issues in close coordination with UNOCI military and police units. They also work closely with local authorities and humanitarian aid agencies in areas of concern.

34. UNOCI and the country team established a mechanism to better identify key protection concerns and coordinate responses to existing protection challenges and enhance contingency planning. The Mission is also in the process of establishing local-level protection of civilians working groups, which will be the main point of contact between the humanitarian community and it to facilitate information sharing.

35. The Mission continues to support local security and early warning and sensitization committees, which play an important role in coordinating security responses and managing conflicts. Meanwhile, building on an existing early warning mechanism to prevent sexual violence, UNOCI has established emergency numbers in field offices and distributed cell phones to focal points in those areas in western Côte d'Ivoire with high rates of sexual violence in order to facilitate rapid response. UNOCI also reactivated its call centre in Yamoussoukro so that the population can share its protection concerns with the Mission. Information collected is then analysed and conveyed to the relevant entities for action. This also informs the Mission contingency planning by identifying areas of concern.

36. UNOCI military and police personnel have enhanced their presence and patrolling in areas of concern in western Côte d'Ivoire, particularly in the Duékoué area, along the border with Liberia, in and around Abidjan and in the south-eastern part of the country along the border with Ghana. UNOCI has already established police posts in Taï, Toulépleu and Tabou, while Formed Police Units are operating from Guiglo and Taï. UNOCI is also conducting regular patrols along the two main

axes in the north, marked by a high number of attacks on civilians by armed individuals.

37. Over 100 UNOCI personnel have undergone specialized training for the protection of civilians. UNOCI civilian and military components have also provided training to the national security forces. Joint patrols with national security agencies have strengthened the capacity of the national security forces to protect civilians.

Humanitarian situation

38. Although the majority of persons displaced during the post-elections crisis have returned, some 85,000 remain in countries in the subregion, most of them in Liberia, while some 45,000 are still displaced in Côte d'Ivoire. However, interlocutors noted increasing returns over the past months. Humanitarian actors continue to support internally displaced persons, many of whom lack livelihood opportunities and confidence in the security sector. They also observed that pockets of vulnerability remain, particularly in western and drought-affected northern Côte d'Ivoire, as a result of insufficient access to clean drinking water, food insecurity and malnutrition, weakened livelihoods and disrupted access to social services. Overall, interlocutors underscored the need for progress with respect to equitable justice; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and addressing the root causes of the conflict to ensure sustainable returns.

Economic development

39. Many interlocutors acknowledged the strong national macroeconomic recovery, with a current growth rate of 8.5 per cent and a sound national development plan for the period 2012-2015. The donor response during the consultative group meeting in Paris in December 2012 and the visit of the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Christine Lagarde, in January 2013, demonstrated the strong support of the international community. Some partners assessed that the growth dynamic notwithstanding, progress to reach the Millennium Development Goals was relatively slow, as a result of increasing social demands and insufficient allocation of public resources, continuing high unemployment, uneven wealth distribution and reports of corruption. They emphasized the need for economic recovery efforts through employment creation and income generation.

B. Capacity of the Ivorian institutions to effectively meet challenges

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

40. All interlocutors identified the presence of former combatants as a major threat, underscoring the importance of progress in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to establish lasting stability. The establishment of a single authority for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and the subsequent commencement of ad hoc disarmament, demobilization and reintegration operations were positive steps. Some 2,000 former combatants have so far been disarmed and demobilized and are in the process of being employed in public service positions as prison guards. Some 2,000 additional former combatants are to be disarmed, demobilized and integrated, as appropriate, into the customs and border administration. There is an expectation that progress will now accelerate more steadily based on a comprehensive strategy that is being developed by the Government, with United

Nations support. However, concerns were expressed about the quality of weapons and weapons-per-combatant ratio achieved so far, which appears to be well below the established 1:1 ratio.

41. Following initial verification efforts by the Government, the estimated caseload of former combatants has been revised from 110,000 to 64,000, including former combatants from both sides, and militias meeting the eligibility criteria. The Government has reportedly agreed to explore the idea of establishing a verification mechanism to ensure that former combatants, who present themselves for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration meet the eligibility criteria and are accounted for in the database, which will enhance its quality and reliability.

42. The Ivorian Government currently envisages that this caseload will be processed over a period of two years. The Government also envisages a reinsertion programme based on socio-professional training in which former combatants would eventually start their own businesses. Some interlocutors recommended that greater attention be paid to the creation of more realistic, equitable and adequately funded reinsertion and reintegration opportunities, including in the private sector, in line with the National Development Plan. Current planning involves agricultural programmes and some income generating schemes, while the Government is actively soliciting other proposals.

43. While recognizing the steps already taken, some interlocutors expressed concern that only former combatants affiliated with the current Government during the crisis, including former Forces nouvelles members, would benefit from the programme. In this regard, they underscored the need for a balanced approach aimed at contributing to reconciliation. Government interlocutors have emphasized that all former combatants, including pro-Gbagbo elements, would benefit from the programme, although this has not been the case to date. Some interlocutors also highlighted the need for enhanced efforts to sensitize former combatants about the process with a view to managing expectations, as it will not be possible to place all of them in the public administration.

Capacity of the armed forces, police and gendarmerie

44. Most interlocutors noted the improved capacity and increased presence of the national security agencies, including police and gendarmerie, across the country. Furthermore, a new security structure, the Centre for the Coordination of Operational Decisions, has been established under the Minister of the Interior to secure strategic sites, combat crime, prevent acts of terrorism and ensure the security of State institutions in Abidjan. It comprises 750 personnel from the armed forces, the gendarmerie and the police. The establishment of this structure was considered a positive development aimed at increasing coherence among security agencies, thereby enhancing security in and around Abidjan. It will be vital that the Centre operate in a transparent and accountable manner within the rule of law.

45. FRCI continues to face many challenges, including inadequate equipment, lack of training and poor discipline. The cohesion of the components comprising FRCI remains a challenge, exacerbated by mistrust resulting from the political affiliations of some of its members and the absence of a unified chain of command. As mentioned earlier, involvement of FRCI elements in human rights violations and exactions against the population with impunity and the continued reliance of some on parallel structures for providing security have hampered professionalizing the

armed forces. A lack of clarity on the roles and the responsibilities of FRCI, the police and the gendarmerie, coupled with mistrust within and among the security forces, were also identified as major challenges. Finally, the police and the gendarmerie continue to lack the necessary equipment, which, according to some interlocutors, relates to a lack of trust in these law enforcement agencies.

Security and justice sector reform

46. Most interlocutors recognized the progress made over the past months with the endorsement of the national security sector reform strategy by the National Security Council, although the process remains in the planning stage. There is no action plan or communications strategy in place yet, although sensitization campaigns started in February with UNOCI support. The strategy adopts an ambitious approach to security sector reform and identifies over 100 activities that should take place incrementally over periods ranging from 6 months to 10 years. A secretariat within the National Security Council, including a consultative group comprising international partners, has been established to monitor implementation of the strategy. Many interlocutors stressed the need for more concrete, immediate measures to advance this critical process.

47. International and some national stakeholders also identified the need for greater clarity on the size of the armed forces, the organization of the chain of command and their budget. The recommendation of the international community to establish a vetting mechanism for personnel that will be absorbed in security sector institutions has not yet been accepted, although efforts have commenced to develop a vetting mechanism for police personnel. Proposals to ensure civilian oversight and the role of the National Assembly remain unclear. Interlocutors expressed concern about a potential corporate unwillingness on the part of uniformed personnel to accept change, observing that the implementation of the national security sector reform strategy is a highly sensitive process and many difficult decisions lie ahead.

48. The assessment mission's interlocutors were positive about the adoption by the Government of a 2012-2015 national justice sector reform strategy. However, they also observed that poor capacity and lack of training of the criminal investigative branches of the police and the gendarmerie, insufficient financial resources, inadequate management, lack of institutional independence, a sense of impunity, lack of access to justice and the absence of victim and witness protection programmes have undermined the confidence of the population in the justice sector. President Ouattara has requested the National Assembly to revise legislation that prevents replacing judges and other judicial officers, even if they were deemed incompetent. Modest efforts were made to expand access to justice with the establishment of six new legal clinics, which will start providing services by June.

49. Interlocutors also observed that jurisdictions are not fully compliant with international standards, especially the Court of Assizes and the military tribunal, while the military justice system, which has jurisdiction over FRCI, the police and the gendarmerie, has limited capacity. UNOCI, together with international partners, is currently providing technical and logistical assistance to the Government to address these issues.

50. Meanwhile, the national prison system lacks the appropriate legislation, organizational structure and infrastructure.

Extension of State authority

51. Interlocutors pointed to an improvement in the capacity of local administrations and an increased presence of the State throughout the country. In addition, prefects play an important role in coordinating security matters and in local conflict resolution. Security and sensitization and early warning committees have been established in most areas. However, interventions remain limited, owing to a lack of capacity, established procedures and resources, which have hampered the functioning of the local administration, which is generally effective.

52. Fiscal administration has been largely redeployed throughout the country, although weaknesses are still observed in the customs administration, where a lack of resources hamper effective operations, particularly border monitoring. In the absence of customs at most border posts, the national security agencies control the movement of goods.

53. With some 150,000 civil servants in Côte d'Ivoire, public administration reform and the building of relevant administrative capacities constitute major challenges. The Government is in the process of preparing an audit of its workforce to produce more efficient and inclusive public policies.

Safety and security of United Nations personnel

54. United Nations personnel in Côte d'Ivoire have been affected mostly by crime, particularly in Abidjan. Over the past year, 14 home robberies and three street robberies involving United Nations personnel were reported. There is also a risk that United Nations personnel may be affected by attacks targeting national security forces, especially while working with security agencies. Although Côte d'Ivoire has no history of terrorism, Government interlocutors noted the increased risk of terrorist attacks stemming from the crisis in Mali.

III. Recommendations

Adjustments in the structure and strength of UNOCI

55. Given the prevailing situation on the ground and the still-limited capacity of Ivorian institutions to effectively address continuing threats to the country's long-term peace and stability, the UNOCI presence remains necessary, albeit with some adjustments in its structure, strength and priorities. As at 13 March, the UNOCI military strength stood at 9,552 personnel (see annex I). This should be reduced by at least one battalion by 31 July 2013, reaching a total of 8,837 military personnel, comprising 8,645 troops and staff officers and 192 military observers.

56. The possibility of further reducing the protection arrangements provided by UNOCI should also be explored with the Government. A gradual reduction of two more battalions by mid-2015 is also envisaged, based on the situation on the ground and progress towards meeting agreed benchmarks, with a review in early 2015.

57. In developing these recommendations, the assessment team took into consideration the need for UNOCI to retain the capability to rapidly reinforce UNMIL through inter-mission cooperation arrangements, in accordance with resolution 1609 (2005), as was recommended in my special report on UNMIL of April 2012 (S/2012/230). A UNOCI quick reaction capability should be able to

provide support, as needed, to UNMIL and to respond to other crises in the subregion, as required.

58. The introduction of unmanned aerial systems in UNOCI should also be considered, taking into account consultations in the Security Council and ongoing discussions in other bodies. This would enhance situational awareness and monitoring ability, with a view to strengthening the ability of UNOCI to efficiently and effectively carry out its mandate, including the protection of civilians.

59. As at 13 March, 1,518 out of the UNOCI authorized police strength of 1,555 were deployed (see annex I). The full complement of that police strength should be maintained, with adjustments to the deployment of formed police units to respond to the prevailing situation on the ground, including by possibly deploying one additional formed police unit to Abidjan within the overall authorized police strength.

60. The UNOCI civilian presence should be adjusted to focus on its core priorities, in accordance with resolution 2062 (2012), in particular the protection of civilians, security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, while also continuing to enhance its civilian presence in the field.

Enhancing capacity to protect civilians and prevent sexual violence

61. I have requested my Special Representative for Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, to examine the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and develop recommendations on how best to support the Government in this regard. I have also requested UNOCI to accelerate its implementation of the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence, while UNOCI and the country team continue supporting the Government in combating sexual violence. I will also continue to encourage troop- and police-contributing countries to increase their deployment of women personnel to improve access and support for local women and provide a greater sense of security to local populations, including women and children.

Enhancing border security and options to reinforce intermission cooperation arrangements

62. The security situation in the border area between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia has improved considerably. However, sustaining peace in Côte d'Ivoire, including in its border areas, cannot be achieved through security measures alone. Concrete measures are required to address the root causes of the crisis and the grievances of the population in these areas. The positive relations Côte d'Ivoire has built with its neighbours, its leadership role within ECOWAS, and the overall improvements in the security environment provide an important window of opportunity to address these difficult issues.

63. As indicated in my previous reports on UNMIL, the border area with Côte d'Ivoire will remain a priority, even as UNMIL continues to drawdown its troops and hand security responsibilities over to the Liberian authorities. At the same time, enhancing the capacity of the Liberian authorities to effectively manage the borders is a core benchmark for the security transition process. Although the transition timelines for UNOCI are different, it is important for Côte d'Ivoire to enhance its capacity to effectively govern and secure its borders. Both missions should therefore

continue to support national civilian and security institutions on both sides of the border, with a view to allowing them to play more of a lead role on border stabilization. While Operation Mayo should continue, UNOCI and UNMIL should further consult both Governments on how the United Nations could best support the establishment and the functioning of a joint mechanism for information exchange and cooperation between local civilian authorities on both sides of the border.

64. It is also recommended that the two Missions continue to help the Governments engage one another on a more systemic basis on issues of mutual interest, including the development of a shared border strategy, through the existing quadripartite framework or any other mechanism. In addition to security-related measures, such a comprehensive strategy, jointly developed by the two Governments, could include long-term stabilization measures focusing on issues such as the sustainable return of refugees to Côte d'Ivoire and their reintegration, the reintegration of former combatants, reconciliation, land tenure issues, and confidence-building measures between communities on both sides of the border.

65. As requested by resolution 2062 (2012), possible options for reinforcing inter-mission cooperation arrangements between UNMIL and UNOCI, including the conduct of coordinated and joint operations along and across the border, were examined. Neither the situation nor the terrain allow for additional cross-border operations beyond the aerial patrols conducted by the three armed helicopters shared between UNMIL and UNOCI. However, the two Missions will continue to further develop the cooperation that has evolved over the past several years, including through continued enhanced interaction and information-exchange between the various substantive components. The United Nations system will continue to enhance its cross-border programming, in order to increase the effectiveness of the Organization's contribution to the durable stabilization of Côte d'Ivoire's fragile borders.

66. Over the past few years, I have proposed the development of a regional security strategy aimed at providing a comprehensive framework for addressing common and cross-border challenges. To date, progress in addressing transnational threats has been slow. I have requested the United Nations presences in West Africa to continue to deepen their strategic engagement with the relevant regional organizations, in particular the Mano River Union and ECOWAS, with a view to supporting them in managing issues that could trigger conflict in West Africa. A renewed effort, including enhanced resource mobilization from participating United Nations entities, is required to help the Ivorian authorities develop transnational crime units within the framework of the existing West Africa Coast Initiative.

Development of benchmarks

67. The Security Council, in its resolution 2062 (2012), requested that I prepare benchmarks to measure and track progress towards the achievement of long-term stability in Côte d'Ivoire and to prepare for transition planning. The assessment mission consulted the Ivorian authorities, United Nations presences on the ground and other key stakeholders on such benchmarks in a few strategic areas, such as political/reconciliation; security/stability; extension of State authority/human rights; and humanitarian/socioeconomic development. These benchmarks should set out minimum conditions that would allow UNOCI to begin drawing down and preparing for the transition to a post-peacekeeping presence. Further consultation is still

necessary. I have therefore requested UNOCI and the United Nations country team to work with the Government to finalize the strategic objectives and benchmarks, along with indicators of achievement, for inclusion in my next report to be submitted to the Council by 30 June.

IV. Observations

68. I welcome the significant progress that has been made in Côte d'Ivoire since the end of the violent post-elections crisis, particularly in the overall security situation. The advances achieved over the past two years illustrate that Côte d'Ivoire has the potential to reclaim its historic role as an anchor for stability and prosperity in the subregion. The people of Côte d'Ivoire are to be commended for their efforts to overcome the legacy of the past. I also commend the leadership and personal engagement of President Ouattara, which have been crucial to effectively address security challenges and accelerate economic recovery, while taking forward sensitive processes that are critical to achieving peace and long-term stability in Côte d'Ivoire.

69. The Government's gestures towards the opposition and its engagement in direct discussions with the former ruling party are encouraging. I urge both parties to intensify these discussions with a view to paving the way for political reconciliation. It will be important that all political parties occupy their legitimate political space and participate constructively in the political life of the country, including by ensuring conditions conducive to the widest possible participation in the upcoming local elections.

70. With the 2015 presidential elections only two years away, now is the time to intensify efforts to enhance dialogue and normalize relations, while also laying the foundations for a peaceful and inclusive electoral process. I wish to stress the importance of taking forward the necessary electoral reforms, in order to ensure that those elections are free, fair and inclusive and that the results are accepted by all.

71. I also welcome the improvements in the security situation in the border area with Liberia, as a result of the leadership of President Ouattara and President Johnson Sirleaf, the enhanced cooperation between the national authorities and the deployment of security personnel on both sides of the border. However, preserving stability along the border cannot be achieved through security measures alone. Such measures must be accompanied by meaningful efforts to address the root causes of the Ivorian conflict, as well as new grievances. The United Nations will therefore continue to support the civilian and security authorities of both countries to help develop national capacities to manage conflicts and land-related issues in the border areas. I also welcome the important efforts at the highest levels between Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana to improve bilateral dialogue and cooperation, which have significantly enhanced confidence between the two countries.

72. Notwithstanding the considerable progress made so far, Côte d'Ivoire still faces significant threats that need to be addressed in order to ensure long-term stability. Disarming and reintegrating former combatants on both sides of the political divide remains critical to mitigate a major internal threat to sustained peace and will pose a major challenge. The swift processing of the first caseloads of former combatants who have been employed in the public administration is an encouraging start. I urge the Government to maintain the momentum and accelerate

the process in a fully transparent manner, including through the development of a comprehensive national strategy, while ensuring equal opportunities to all eligible former combatants. Political balance is key to the credibility and the success of the programme. It will be important that bilateral and multilateral partners continue to support the efforts of the Government to create sustainable reintegration opportunities, which are needed to prevent former combatants from taking up arms again.

73. I remain concerned about increasing subregional security threats, including transnational crime, terrorism and piracy. The subregion, including Côte d'Ivoire, will need to enhance its capacity to address such threats. I intend to continue to explore options for deepening the United Nations strategic engagement with ECOWAS and the Mano River Union on regional and cross-border issues.

74. The publication of the report of the National Commission of Inquiry on crimes committed during the violent post-elections crisis was an important step. Alleged perpetrators of serious crimes must be brought to justice irrespective of their political affiliation in order to break the vicious cycle of impunity and build a culture of accountability. I reiterate the United Nations expectation that the individuals allegedly involved in the killing of the seven UNOCI peacekeepers in western Côte d'Ivoire in June 2012 will be brought to justice swiftly, and in accordance with the rule of law. I would also urge the Government to complete its investigation into the attack on the camp for internally displaced persons in Duékoué last year, which is critical to address impunity and promote social cohesion. Efforts must also be intensified to promote community-based reconciliation and address the root causes of conflict in the country.

75. The reform of the security sector, while sensitive, is essential to ensure that Côte d'Ivoire has republican national security forces and a police and gendarmerie who fully assume their law and order responsibilities, ensure a secure and stable environment and protect the civilian population. I urge the authorities to continue to take concrete steps to implement the national security sector reform strategy.

76. In light of the persisting challenges and threats identified by the assessment mission, the UNOCI presence remains necessary, particularly with respect to its core priorities, as outlined in resolution 2062 (2012). Adjustments to its structure, strength and priorities are, however, needed to meet the evolving situation on the ground. I therefore recommend reducing the authorized military strength of UNOCI, as previously decided by the Security Council, through the repatriation of at least one battalion by 31 July 2013. At the same time, I would recommend a further progressive reduction of two additional battalions by mid-2015. No reductions are recommended for the UNOCI police component, though as indicated in paragraph 59 above, adjustments will be made within the present authorized ceiling.

77. Côte d'Ivoire has come a considerable way since the post-elections crisis, and has entered a positive new stage in the process of consolidating the hard-won peace. The development of benchmarks will help determine the pace of any future reductions of UNOCI strength and the eventual transition from peacekeeping. Discussions are under way between the United Nations and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire on the elaboration of such benchmarks, and it is my intention to include agreed benchmarks in my next report on UNOCI.

78. I wish to thank my Special Representative, Bert Koenders, for his leadership, and all personnel of UNOCI and the United Nations country team for their dedication in supporting the stabilization of Côte d'Ivoire. I would also like to express my appreciation to the countries contributing troops and police to UNOCI and to multilateral and regional organizations, donor countries and non-governmental organizations that continue to provide invaluable support to Côte d'Ivoire.

Annex I

United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire: military and police strength as at 13 March 2013

	Military component				*Police component*	
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Formed police units*	*Police*
Argentina	–	–	–	–	–	2
Bangladesh	12	9	2 161	2 182	360	–
Benin	8	8	420	436	–	58
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	3	–	–	3	–	–
Brazil	3	3	–	6	–	–
Burkina Faso	–	–	–	–	–	23
Burundi	–	–	–	–	–	43
Cameroon	–	–	–	–	–	18
Canada	–	–	–	–	–	9
Central African Republic	–	–	–	–	–	8
Chad	4	1	–	5	–	21
China	6	–	–	6	–	–
Djibouti	–	–	–	–	–	42
Democratic Republic of the Congo	–	–	–	–	–	15
Ecuador	2	–	–	2	–	–
Egypt	–	1	175	176	–	15
El Salvador	3	–	–	3	–	–
Ethiopia	2	–	–	2	–	–
France	–	6	–	6	–	13
Gambia	3	–	–	3	–	–
Ghana	6	7	500	513	–	5
Guatemala	5	–	–	5	–	–
Guinea	2	–	–	2	–	10
India	7	–	–	7	–	–
Ireland	2	–	–	2	–	–
Jordan	7	12	1 052	1 071	489	21
Madagascar	–	–	–	–	–	40
Malawi	3	3	857	863	–	–
Morocco	–	3	722	725	–	–
Namibia	1	–	–	1	–	–
Nepal	3	1	–	4	–	–
Niger	4	4	932	940	–	59
Nigeria	4	1	63	68	–	4
Pakistan	11	11	1 376	1 398	148	–
Paraguay	7	2	–	9	–	–

Country	Military component				Police component	
	Military observers	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Formed police units*	*Police*
Peru	3	–	–	3	–	–
Philippines	3	3	–	6	–	–
Poland	2	–	–	2	–	–
Republic of Korea	2	–	–	2	–	–
Republic of Moldova	4	–	–	4	–	–
Romania	6	–	–	6	–	–
Russian Federation	11	–	–	11	–	–
Rwanda	–	–	–	–	–	15
Senegal	13	7	488	508	–	20
Serbia	3	–	–	3	–	–
Togo	7	8	517	532	–	19
Tunisia	7	3	–	10	–	20
Turkey	–	–	–	–	–	15
Uganda	5	2	–	7	–	–
Ukraine	–	–	–	–	–	7
United Republic of Tanzania	2	2	–	4	–	–
Uruguay	2	–	–	2	–	4
Yemen	9	–	–	9	–	15
Zambia	2	–	–	2	–	–
Zimbabwe	3	–	–	3	–	–
Total	**192**	**97**	**9 263**	**9 552**	**997**	**521**

Annex II

Map of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire deployment

Map No. 4220 Rev. 48 UNITED NATIONS
March 2013 (Colour)

Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section